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Report of the Secretary-General of the International Seabed Authority under article 166, paragraph 4, of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted to the Assembly of the Authority pursuant to article 166, paragraph 4, of the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea ("the Convention"). The report provides information on the work of the Authority during the period from July 2014 to June 2015.

2. The Authority is an autonomous international organization established under the Convention and the 1994 Agreement relating to the Implementation of Part XI of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea ("the 1994 Agreement"). The Authority is the organization through which States parties to the Convention shall, in accordance with the regime for the seabed and ocean floor and subsoil thereof beyond the limits of national jurisdiction ("the Area"), established in Part XI of the Convention and the 1994 Agreement, organize and control activities in the Area, in particular with a view to administering the resources of the Area. It does this strictly in accordance with the provisions of the Convention and the 1994 Agreement through a contract-based system, which involves issuing contracts of limited duration to those entities wishing to explore for or exploit minerals in the seabed beyond national jurisdiction.

3. The Authority has a number of specific responsibilities under other provisions of the Convention, such as the responsibility to distribute to States parties to the Convention payments or contributions in kind derived from exploitation of the resources of the continental shelf beyond 200 nautical miles, pursuant to article 82, paragraph 4, of the Convention and the responsibility, under articles 145 and 209, to establish international rules, regulations and procedures to prevent, reduce and control pollution of the marine environment from activities in the Area and to adopt measures to protect and conserve the natural resources of the Area and prevent damage to the flora and fauna of the marine environment.

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4. Pending the approval of the first plan of work for exploitation, the Authority is to concentrate on the 11 areas of work listed in paragraph 5 of section 1 of the annex to the 1994 Agreement. In view of the limited resources available to the Authority, the relative priority to be given to each of those areas of work has been dependent on the pace of development of commercial interest in deep seabed mining and the work programme of the Authority has remained largely unchanged since 2004. The main focus is on the following areas:

(a) Supervisory functions with regard to contracts for exploration;

(b) Monitoring of trends and developments relating to deep seabed mining activities, including world metal market conditions and metal prices, trends and prospects;

(c) Development of an appropriate regulatory framework for the future development of the mineral resources of the Area, including standards for the protection and preservation of the marine environment during their development;

(d) Promotion and encouragement of marine scientific research in the Area through, among other things, a continuing programme of technical workshops, the dissemination of the results of such research and collaboration with contractors and the international scientific community;

(e) Information-gathering and the establishment and development of unique databases of scientific and technical information, with a view to obtaining a better understanding of the deep ocean environment.

5. As the work of the Authority has progressed, the scope of the work programme has also increased; in particular new areas of work have been identified. During the seventeenth session, the Council had decided to establish an environmental management plan for the Clarion-Clipperton Zone in the Pacific Ocean, taking into account General Assembly resolution 63/111, the discussions in the Ad Hoc Open-ended Informal Working Group to study issues relating to the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity beyond areas of national jurisdiction and considering that the implementation of a comprehensive environmental management plan at the regional level is one of the measures required to ensure effective protection of the marine environment of the Area from harmful effects that may arise from activities in it. The environmental management plan for the Clarion-Clipperton Zone, as recommended by the Legal and Technical Commission, was adopted at the eighteenth session, to be implemented over an initial three-year period. It included the designation, on a provisional basis, of a network of areas of particular environmental interest. Similar environmental management plans will also be required in respect of the other minerals for which the Authority has adopted rules, regulations and procedures for prospecting and exploration (polymetallic sulphides and cobalt-rich ferromanganese crusts). With regard to those two minerals, there will also be a need to ensure that standardized taxonomies are established for the mega, macro and meiofauna associated with them.

II. The Area

6. In the Convention, the Area is defined as the seabed and subsoil thereof beyond the limits of national jurisdiction. That means that the establishment of the exact geographic limits of the Area depends on the establishment of the limits of

national jurisdiction, including the delineation of the continental shelf extending beyond 200 nautical miles from the baseline of the territorial sea. For that reason, pursuant to article 84, paragraph 2, of the Convention, coastal States are obliged to give due publicity to charts or lists of geographical coordinates of points and, in the case of those indicating the outer limit lines of the continental shelf, to deposit a copy of such charts or lists with the Secretary-General of the Authority.

7. To date, only five members of the Authority have deposited such charts and lists with the Secretary-General, namely: Australia, Ireland, Mexico, Niue and Philippines. The Secretary-General takes the opportunity to urge all coastal States to deposit such charts or lists of coordinates as soon as possible after the establishment of the outer limit lines of their continental shelf, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Convention.

8. The Authority also has the responsibility, under article 82, paragraph 4, of the Convention, to distribute to States parties to the Convention payments or contributions in kind derived from exploitation of the resources of the continental shelf beyond 200 nautical miles. It is recalled that, in November 2012, the Authority, in collaboration with the China Institute for Marine Affairs of the State Oceanic Administration of China, convened in Beijing an international workshop on the theme "Further consideration of the implementation of article 82 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea". The participants in the workshop recommended, inter alia, that further examination of the implementation needs of article 82 would benefit from a study of key terms as they are used in contemporary and industry practices across different jurisdictions. The study would help to identify possible paths for a practical approach and build and deepen understanding of the terminological issues in realistic settings. The secretariat hopes to progress that work in 2015, in order to lay a solid theoretical basis for future action with respect to the implementation of article 82, paragraph 4, of the Convention.

III. Membership of the Authority

9. In accordance with article 156, paragraph 2, of the Convention, all States parties to the Convention are, ipso facto, members of the Authority. Since the twentieth session of the Authority, the State of Palestine, has become party to the Convention and the 1994 Agreement. As at 30 May 2015, there were 167 States parties to the Convention and thus 167 members of the Authority (166 States and the European Union). On the same date, there were 147 parties to the 1994 Agreement.

10. On 13 October 2014, Yemen became a party to the 1994 Agreement. However, there are still 20 members of the Authority which became parties to the Convention before the adoption of the 1994 Agreement and which have yet to become parties to the Agreement, namely: Antigua and Barbuda, Bahrain, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Comoros, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Dominica, Egypt, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Iraq, Mali, Marshall Islands, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Sao Tome and Principe, Somalia and Sudan.

11. As provided by General Assembly resolution 48/263 and the 1994 Agreement itself, the provisions of the 1994 Agreement and Part XI of the Convention are to be interpreted and applied together as a single instrument. In the event of any

inconsistency between the 1994 Agreement and Part XI of the Convention, the provisions of the 1994 Agreement would prevail. Although members of the Authority that are not parties to the 1994 Agreement necessarily participate in the work of the Authority under arrangements based on that Agreement, becoming a party to the 1994 Agreement would remove any incongruity that currently exists for those States.

12. For the above-mentioned reason and at the request of the Assembly, the Secretary-General of the Authority has each year since 1998 circulated a letter to all members in that position, urging them to consider becoming parties to the 1994 Agreement as soon as possible. In the most recent such letter, circulated on 10 March 2015, attention was drawn to operative paragraph 3 of General Assembly resolution 69/245, in which the Assembly called upon all States that had not done so, to become parties to the Convention and the 1994 Agreement, in order to achieve the goal of universal participation. The Secretary-General encourages all those members of the Authority that are not yet parties to the 1994 Agreement to become parties at the earliest possible opportunity.

IV. Permanent missions to the Authority

13. As at 31 May 2015, the following 23 States, in addition to the European Union, maintained permanent missions to the Authority: Argentina, Antigua and Barbuda, Bangladesh, Belgium, Brazil, Cameroon, Chile, China, Cuba, France, Gabon, Germany, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Mexico, Nigeria, Panama, Republic of Korea, Saint Kitts and Nevis, South Africa, Spain and Trinidad and Tobago.

V. Relations with the host country

14. The relationship between the Authority and the host country is governed by the headquarters agreement between the Authority and the Government of Jamaica, which entered into force on 26 August 1999, and a supplementary agreement regarding the headquarters of the Authority and the use of the Jamaica Conference Centre complex, which entered into force on 2 June 2004.

15. During the reporting period, the secretariat continued its efforts to resolve long-standing problems concerning the poor condition of the air-conditioning units in the headquarters building, which are more than 20 years old, and the inconsistent water supply to the building, as previously reported by the Secretary-General. While the Government of Jamaica has addressed some of those issues, problems remain owing to the ageing of the fabric of the building.

16. Pursuant to the supplementary agreement, the Authority uses the Jamaica Conference Centre complex for its annual sessions. The rental cost for the complex is met from the administrative budget of the Authority, while responsibility for its maintenance and upkeep lies with the Government of Jamaica. Over the past several years, the meetings of the Authority have been adversely affected by persistent problems with the audio systems used for interpretation. While the management of the Conference Centre has made some effort to improve the system, persistent interruptions continued to be experienced during the meetings of the Legal and

Technical Commission held in February 2015. In large part, those problems are caused by ageing infrastructure and are not likely to be resolved by temporary fixes.

17. The Secretary-General wishes to express appreciation for the efforts made by the Government of Jamaica over the past several years to encourage better attendance at the annual sessions by waiving visa requirement for delegates travelling from countries in which Jamaica has no embassy or consulate. The process involves prior clearance with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade and is facilitated through the protocol office at the Authority.

VI. Protocol on the Privileges and Immunities of the International Seabed Authority

18. The Protocol on the Privileges and Immunities of the International Seabed Authority was adopted by consensus at the fourth session of the Assembly on 26 March 1998 (see ISBA/4/A/8). In accordance with article 18 of the Protocol, it entered into force 30 days after the date of deposit of the tenth instrument of ratification, approval, acceptance or accession, on 31 March 2003.

19. The Protocol deals with the privileges and immunities of the Authority in relation to those matters which are not already covered in the Convention (articles 176 to 183) and is based substantially on articles I, II, IV, V, VI and VII of the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations of 13 February 1946. The Protocol, inter alia, provides essential protection to representatives of members of the Authority who attend meetings of the Authority or who travel to and from those meetings. It also accords to experts on mission for the Authority such privileges and immunities as are necessary for the independent exercise of their functions, while on mission, and for the time spent on journeys in connection with their mission.

20. As of 31 May 2015, the following 36 members of the Authority were parties to the Protocol: Argentina, Austria, Brazil, Bulgaria, Cameroon, Chile, Croatia, Cuba, Czech Republic, Denmark, Egypt, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Guyana, India, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Lithuania, Mauritius, Mozambique, Netherlands, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Uruguay. A further 12 States have signed the Protocol but have yet to ratify it, namely: Bahamas, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Greece, Indonesia, Kenya, Malta, Namibia, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Senegal and Sudan.

21. In an attempt to encourage members of the Authority to become parties to the Protocol, in May 2015 the Secretary-General circulated a briefing note further elaborating the provisions of the Protocol and describing the processes necessary for ratification, acceptance, approval or accession. Members of the Authority that are not yet parties are strongly encouraged to take the necessary steps to become parties to the Protocol at their earliest convenience.

VII. Administrative matters

A. Secretariat

22. The total number of established posts in the secretariat remained at 37 (20 Professional and 17 General Service). A number of vacant positions were filled during the reporting period as follows: Budget and Internal Oversight Officer (P-4), Finance Assistant (GS6), Budget Assistant (GS5), Information Technology Assistant (GS5) and Administrative Assistant for the Office of Administration and Management (GS5).

23. The Secretary-General reports with deep regret that, in September 2014, a long-serving and highly-valued member of the secretariat, Rupert Beckford (Jamaica) passed away at a tragically young age following a long illness. The Secretary-General and the staff of the Authority wish to express their deep condolences to Mr. Beckford's widow and family and to place on record their appreciation for his dedicated service to the Authority.

B. Participation in the common system of the United Nations

24. The Authority is an autonomous international organization, but applies to its staff the common system of salaries, allowances and other conditions of service of the United Nations and its specialized agencies. Since 2013, the Authority has subscribed to the statute of the International Civil Service Commission and is therefore a full participant in the United Nations common system of salaries, allowances and other conditions of service, with all associated benefits and obligations.

25. The eightieth session of the Commission took place in New York from 16 to 27 March 2015. The primary focus of the session was the comprehensive review of the United Nations common system compensation package and the outcome of the local salary survey that was conducted in September 2014 in Kingston. That resulted in an overall increase of 5.1 per cent in the salary level for positions in the General Service.

26. The Office of Administration and Management represents the Authority at the monthly meetings of the operations management team and the security management team, which are convened by the United Nations country team in Jamaica.[1] One of the objectives of the operations management team is to reduce administrative costs by avoiding duplication of work and promoting inter-agency collaboration through streamlining business practices. That initiative covers areas such as human resources management, information technology, finance, procurement, travel and common premises, and has so far resulted in two collaborative agreements covering a common procurement system for stationery and office supplies and a regional long-term agreement for travel management. It is anticipated that by 2016, the country team in Jamaica could achieve a 15 per cent reduction in procurement costs

[1] The participating agencies are the United Nations Population Fund, Pan-American Health Organization, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, United Nations Environment Programme, Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, United Nations Development Programme and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

and a 30 per cent reduction in procurement time in support of United Nations Development Assistance Framework outcomes.

VIII. Financial matters

A. Budget

27. At its twentieth session, the Assembly adopted the administrative budget for the financial period 2015-2016 in the amount of $15,743,143 (ISBA/20/A/12).

B. Status of contributions

28. In accordance with the Convention and the 1994 Agreement, the administrative expenses of the Authority shall be met by assessed contributions of its members until the Authority has sufficient funds from other sources to meet those expenses. The scale of assessments shall be based on the scale used for the regular budget of the United Nations, adjusted for differences in membership. As at 30 April 2015, 61.4 per cent of the value of contributions to the 2015 budget due from member States and the European Community had been received from 36.1 per cent of the membership of the Authority.

29. Contributions outstanding from member States for prior periods (1998-2014) amount to $468,908. Notices are sent on a regular basis to member States, reminding them of the arrears. In accordance with article 184 of the Convention and rule 80 of the rules of procedure of the Assembly, a member of the Authority which is in arrears in the payment of its financial contribution shall have no vote if the amount of its arrears equals or exceeds the amount of financial contribution due from it for the preceding two years. As at 30 April 2015, the following 48 members of the Authority had been in arrears for two years or more: Barbados, Belize, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cabo Verde, Chad, Comoros, Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Equatorial Guinea, Gambia, Ghana, Grenada, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Honduras, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Maldives, Mali, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Morocco, Namibia, Nepal, Pakistan, Palau, Paraguay, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Swaziland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Uganda, Vanuatu, Yemen and Zambia.

30. As at 30 April 2015, the balance of the Working Capital Fund stood at $559,341, against an approved level of $560,000.

C. Voluntary trust fund

31. The voluntary trust fund for the participation of members of the Finance Committee and the Legal and Technical Commission from developing countries was established in 2002. Provisional terms and conditions for the use of the fund were adopted by the Assembly in 2003 and amended in 2004 (see ISBA/9/A/5-ISBA/9/C/5, para. 6 and annex and ISBA/9/A/9, para. 14). The trust fund is made up of voluntary contributions from members of the Authority and others. Total contributions to the

fund amount to $584,584. The most recent contribution was made by Japan in September 2014, in the amount of $21,660. The balance of the voluntary trust fund as at 30 April 2015 stood at $225,187.

D. Endowment Fund for Marine Scientific Research in the Area

32. The Assembly established the Endowment Fund for Marine Scientific Research in the Area in 2006 (see ISBA/12/A/11). Detailed rules and procedures for the administration and utilization of the Fund were adopted in 2007 (see ISBA/13/A/6, annex). The Fund aims to promote and encourage the conduct of marine scientific research in the Area for the benefit of humankind as a whole, in particular by supporting the participation of qualified scientists and technical personnel from developing countries in marine scientific research programmes, including through training, technical assistance and scientific cooperation programmes. The Fund is administered by the secretariat. Members of the Authority, other States, relevant international organizations, academic, scientific and technical institutions, philanthropic organizations and private persons may make contributions to the Fund.

33. As at 31 May 2015, the capital of the Fund stood at $3,455,538. As at the same date, a total of $480,081 had been disbursed from the interest accrued on the capital in the form of awards for projects. Since the last session, two contributions have been received: one from Mexico for $7,500 and one from Tonga for $1,000. Information on the substantive activities of the Fund is contained in paragraphs 85 to 91 of the present report. A detailed report on alternative investments for the capital of the Fund has been prepared for consideration by the Finance Committee during the twenty-first session.

IX. Satya N. Nandan Library

34. The Satya N. Nandan Library, named after the first Secretary-General of the Authority, is the main information resource for the secretariat, member States, permanent missions and other researchers seeking specialist information on the law of the sea, ocean affairs, deep seabed mining and seabed resources. Its principal objective is to service the reference and research needs of its clientele and to provide essential support for the work of the secretariat. The Library is also responsible for the archiving and distribution of the official documents of the Authority and assists with the publications programme. Important linkages are maintained with local and international entities. The Library is an active member of the International Association of Aquatic and Marine Science Libraries and Information Centres and the Library and Information Association of Jamaica.

35. The Library facilities available to visitors, including delegates, consist of a reading room with access to the collection for reference purposes, computer terminals for e-mail and Internet usage and access to the database of the Library. Library services include the provision of information, reference and research support and resources, as well as the distribution of the official documents and publications of the Authority. The Authority remains committed to developing the specialized research capability of the existing collection through an acquisitions

programme aimed at building upon and strengthening the comprehensive collection of reference material held by the Library.

36. The Library continues to plan and undertake projects aimed at continuous improvement of the services and physical resources, enhancement of information delivery, harmonization of activities and the sharing of resources. Funds were approved for the acquisition of new furniture during the financial period 2013-2014, as was partial funding for the deployment of an integrated library system. In 2014, the public access area of the library was updated with a new reception area and improved reading areas. Those changes took into consideration the multiple uses of the Library and anticipated future changes in information servicing. It is noted that the last major refurbishment of the Library took place in 1999.

37. Since 2012, the secretariat has developed a successful collaboration with the Registry of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea in the provision of library and information services, beginning with a visit by the librarian of the Tribunal in 2012. That collaboration has led to a partnership between the Authority and the Tribunal for the acquisition of electronic resources through the United Nations System Electronic Information Acquisitions Consortium. The Consortium is a system-wide libraries initiative, which generates considerable savings in access to electronic journals and publications for participating agencies.

38. In 2014, the librarian of the Authority visited the Tribunal library in order to further collaborative efforts and review the implementation by the Tribunal of its new integrated library system. A great deal was learnt from the visit in terms of the challenges faced by the Tribunal in the procurement and implementation of the system, which has led to a decision to undertake a comprehensive assessment and analysis of the services, systems and future needs of the Satya N. Nandan Library prior to procurement of any integrated library system, in order to ensure that the most viable and cost-effective solutions are implemented.

39. The Satya N. Nandan Library continues its regular acquisitions programme to develop the collection. The holdings have been further augmented by generous donations from organizations and individuals including the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea of the Office of Legal Affairs at the United Nations; the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea; the United Nations Environment Programme; the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations; the United Nations Development Programme; the United Nations Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (UNESCO); the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO; the World Bank; the State Oceanic Administration of the People's Republic of China; the Tokyo Institute of Technology; the Center for Oceans Law and Policy, University of Virginia; the Law of the Sea Institute at the University of California, Berkeley; the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution; the German Advisory Council on Global Change; the United States Institute of Peace and the Ministry of Energy and Mining, Jamaica. Individual donations have also been received from Philomène Verlaan, School of Ocean and Earth Science and Technology, University of Hawaii at Mānoa and Institute of Marine Engineering, Science and Technology, London; Peter Ng Kee Lin, Director, Tropical Marine Science Institute, National University of Singapore; and Prue Taylor and Lucy Stroud, University of Auckland, New Zealand. The Library also welcomed a considerable donation of 100 books on oceanography, seabed mining and related subjects, in both Chinese and English from the State Oceanic Administration of the

People's Republic of China. That generous contribution will greatly enhance the research capability of the Library, especially in Chinese. Staff members continue to donate publications from seminars and workshops they have attended. The Secretary-General is grateful to all who have supported the Library during the reporting period.

40. The commemoration of the twentieth anniversary of the establishment of the Authority generated renewed interest in the activities of the Authority, both in Jamaica and internationally. The Library provided research assistance to many institutions, including the University of California, Santa Barbara; the University of New South Wales; the High Commission of the Republic of Cameroon in London; the People's Daily, China; the China Ocean Mineral Resources Research and Development Association; The Economist; Harper's Magazine; the University of Sao Paulo, Brazil; Kuwait International Law School; the Faculty of Law and the Department of Language, Linguistics and Philosophy, University of the West Indies, Mona, Jamaica; Norman Manley Law School, Mona, Jamaica; the Caribbean Maritime Institute; and a number of Government of Jamaica bodies, including the Attorney General's Department, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, the Mines and Geology Division of the Ministry of Science, Technology, Energy and Mining, the National Environment and Planning Agency and the Jamaica Information Service. Requests were also received from individual researchers, embassies and permanent missions based in Jamaica and internationally, and academic and research institutions in other countries. Research interests included the activities of the Authority and the subject areas covered by the Convention, including the precautionary principle; the regulatory framework for seabed mining; minerals mining in Antarctica; rare earth elements; the status of, and information on, the contracts for exploration and on exploration areas; the principle of the common heritage of mankind; the Third United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea; claims relating to the continental shelf and the exclusive economic zone; current developments in marine mineral resources, research and exploration; mining agreements and regulation; environmental management and protection of the seabed. In addition, there continues to be extensive interest in information on the Endowment Fund and on fellowship and training opportunities available through the Fund. Many requests are received electronically and reflect the increasing international interest in the work of the Authority.

X. Website and public information

41. The Authority launched its redeveloped website in January 2015. The entire website has been redesigned to better present and disseminate the various aspects of the work of the Authority in a consistent format that ensures the provision of an effective communication medium. The new website is powered by Drupal, an open-source content management platform, and is compatible with cross-browser platforms and mobile devices. A separate secure extranet is maintained for members of the Legal and Technical Commission in order to keep them abreast of all the information they need to perform their functions as members of the Commission.

42. In 2014, a mobile application (ISBAHQ App) was launched. It provides a compacted replication of the main content of the website for mobile devices for Android and iOS system users. As with the website, the mobile app is continuously

updated and maintained to ensure that it holds the latest information about the Authority.

43. In keeping with the policy of moving towards electronic publishing, all publications of the Authority are made freely available online in digital format. Many publications may also be downloaded through the mobile app. The Authority continues to make use with great success of the print-on-demand service through its digital storefront on Amazon.com, which has resulted in a significant reduction in print inventory and publication costs.[2] The website of the Authority hosts a complete list of all current and forthcoming publications.

XI. Visits to the headquarters of the Authority

44. On 11 September 2014, a Chinese delegation headed by the Secretary-General of the China Ocean Mineral Resources Research and Development Association, made an official visit to the headquarters of the Authority. The delegation was composed of officials from the National People's Congress of China and the China Institute for Marine Affairs. Among other issues, the delegation discussed national legislation for deep seabed mining in the Area.

45. In October 2014, a Chilean delegation, led by the Ambassador of Chile to Jamaica and Permanent Representative to the International Seabed Authority, made a two-day visit to the Authority. The Ambassador was accompanied by the Executive Secretary of the National Oceanographic Committee of Chile.

46. In April 2015, as part of a training programme, a group of seven young government officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Royal Court of Saudi Arabia paid a field visit to the headquarters of the Authority. That was the third visit of the same type by a delegation from Saudi Arabia to the Authority. Previous visits took place in 2012 and 2014 respectively. The delegation attended a briefing session, with presentations made by officials of the secretariat on the functions and current work of the Authority, including, inter alia, the structure and functions of the Authority, mineral resources in the Area, marine environmental protection and the training programmes of the Authority.

XII. Relationship with the United Nations and other relevant international organizations

47. The interrelationship between activities in the ocean makes it essential that there is cooperation and coordination between international organizations with mandates over activities in the ocean. That is emphasized in the Convention itself and is critical for a consistent approach that results in the comprehensive protection of the marine environment as part of the sustainable development of activities in the ocean. To that end, the secretariat has participated in a number of initiatives aimed at facilitating the exchange of information and dialogue among users of the international seabed Area.

[2] Available from www.amazon.com/International-Seabed-Authority/e/B00GM20AZU.

A. United Nations

48. The Authority has continued to have a close and productive working relationship with the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea. An officer from the Division participated in the sensitization seminar held by the Authority in South Africa in March 2015. The Secretary-General of the Authority provided information on the activities of the Authority to the twenty-fifth Meeting of States Parties to the Convention in June 2015. That was preceded, on 29 May 2015, by a special briefing by the Secretary-General for the benefit of member States based in New York, on the programme of work for the twenty-first session of the Authority. In June 2015, the Legal Counsel of the Authority provided a briefing to the interns participating in the United Nations-Nippon Foundation of Japan Fellowship Programme for Human Resources Development and Advancement of the Legal Order of the World's Oceans, hosted by the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea.

B. UN-Oceans

49. UN-Oceans is an inter-agency mechanism which seeks to enhance the coordination, coherence and effectiveness of competent organizations of the United Nations system within existing resources, in conformity with the Convention, the respective competences of each of its participating organizations and the mandates and priorities approved by their respective governing bodies. Under its revised terms of reference, set out in the annex to General Assembly resolution 68/70, UN-Oceans is mandated to strengthen and promote the coordination and coherence of United Nations system activities related to ocean and coastal areas; regularly share information about the ongoing and planned activities of participating organizations within the framework of relevant United Nations and other mandates, with a view to identifying possible areas for collaboration and synergy; facilitate, as appropriate, inputs by its participating organizations to the annual reports of the Secretary-General of the United Nations on oceans and the law of the sea and on sustainable fisheries; and facilitate inter-agency information exchange, including the sharing of experiences, best practices, tools and methodologies and lessons learned in ocean-related matters.

50. The secretariat of the Authority is a member of UN-Oceans and participates in its meetings, as appropriate, and in accordance with its mandate. During the reporting period, the Authority participated in a number of teleconferences and was represented at the 14th meeting of UN-Oceans hosted by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) in London on 19 and 20 March 2015.

C. International Cable Protection Committee

51. On 10 and 11 March 2015, the International Cable Protection Committee and the Authority held an inaugural technical workshop on the subject of submarine cables and deep seabed mining, advancing common interests and addressing "due regard" obligations in the Convention. In view of the growing risk of interferences in the Area between laid submarine cables and the conduct of exploration activities under contracts conferring exclusive rights on contractors, the participants discussed practical ways to facilitate the exercise of those activities with due regard for each

other. The report of the workshop has been published in the form of a technical study, along with a briefing paper outlining the salient points and conclusions that were raised during the workshop.

D. Sargasso Sea Commission

52. During the reporting period, the secretariat pursued its collaboration with the Sargasso Sea Commission, the successor to the Sargasso Sea Alliance, an initiative led by the Government of Bermuda to raise awareness of the ecological significance of the Sargasso Sea. The majority of the seafloor of the Sargasso Sea lies in the international seabed Area. The secretariat of the Authority was invited by the Government of Bermuda to participate as an observer at the official signing of the Hamilton Declaration on Collaboration for the Conservation of the Sargasso Sea on 11 March 2014. The Hamilton Declaration is a non-binding arrangement, which has currently been signed by the Regional Government of the Azores and the Governments of Bermuda, Monaco, the United Kingdom and the United States of America.

53. Pursuant to the Hamilton Declaration, the Government of Bermuda established the Sargasso Sea Commission under Bermudan law in August 2014. The Commission, assisted by a secretariat, has no management authority. Its role is to exercise stewardship for the Sargasso Sea and keep its health, productivity and resilience under continual review. The Sargasso Sea Commission has recently submitted a request for observer status at the meetings of the Authority and that request has been placed on the agenda of the twenty-first session of the Assembly.

E. OSPAR Commission

54. The secretariat of the Authority and the secretariat of the OSPAR Commission have continued their long-standing cooperative relationship, which in the past manifested itself in the conclusion of a memorandum of understanding and by the participation of the OSPAR Commission in the elaboration of the environmental management plan for the Clarion-Clipperton Zone. It will also be recalled that, in 2014, the Council requested the secretariat of the Authority to pursue a dialogue with the secretariat of the OSPAR Commission, with a view to reporting back to the Council in 2015 on issues associated with the proposed collective arrangement between competent international organizations on cooperation and coordination regarding selected areas in areas beyond national jurisdiction in the North-East Atlantic ("the collective arrangement").

55. In April 2015, the secretariat was invited by the OSPAR Commission and the North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission to participate in the first meeting under the collective arrangement, to be held in London. Although the secretariat was unable to participate physically, it was able to attend part of the meeting virtually through Skype. It was recalled that the objective of the collective arrangement was to provide a framework for the dialogue and exchange of information on conservation and management measures to safeguard biodiversity in the North-East Atlantic that each organization joining the arrangement has adopted within its remit. To that end, under the collective arrangement, the parties commit, within the scope of their competence, to cooperate in the development and management of selected

areas. At the meeting, information was provided on the location, boundaries and objectives of closed areas for fisheries and on marine protected areas established in the Charlie-Gibbs Fracture Zone. Those spatial management experiences are of relevance at a time when the development of an environmental management plan in the Mid-Atlantic Ridge has been identified as a priority for the Authority. So far, OSPAR and the North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission have joined the collective arrangement. A proposal for joining the collective arrangement has also been placed on the agenda of IMO. A full report on the outcomes of the first meeting under the collective arrangement will be considered by the Council of the Authority in 2015 (ISBA/21/C/9).

F. International Maritime Organization

56. During the reporting period, the secretariats of the Authority and of IMO consulted on the possibility of concluding an agreement of cooperation. As the Authority embarks on the formulation of the regulatory framework for exploitation of deep sea minerals in the Area, technical expertise, advice and assistance from relevant United Nations organizations, bodies and specialized agencies, such as IMO, will be required. The first consultation between IMO and the Authority took place in the margins of the 36th Consultative Meeting of Contracting Parties to the Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and Other Matter, 1972 (London Convention) and the 9th Meeting of Contracting Parties to the 1996 Protocol to the London Convention, 1972, at IMO headquarters in London in 2014. The second meeting also took place in London in the margins of the 14th meeting of UN-Oceans, held in March 2015. As a result of those consultations, both organizations have agreed on the text of a draft memorandum of cooperation which will be placed before their respective authorizing organs for consideration and approval (see ISBA/21/C/10). In the case of IMO, the draft text of the agreement of cooperation will be submitted to the IMO Council at its 114th session, to be held in London from 29 June to 3 July 2015. The matter will be taken up by the Council of the Authority during the twenty-first session.

XIII. Previous session of the Authority

57. The twentieth session of the Authority was held in Kingston from 14 to 25 July 2014. Antonio Francisco Da Costa e Silva Neto (Brazil) was elected President of the Assembly for the session and Tommo Monthe (Cameroon) was elected President of the Council. The Assembly considered the annual report of the Secretary-General, adopted, on the recommendation of the Council, the budget of the Authority for the financial period 2015-2016 and the scale of assessments for 2015 and 2016 and elected 17 members of the Council to serve for a four-year period beginning on 1 January 2015. The Assembly also approved a revised regulation 21 of the Regulations on Prospecting and Exploration for Polymetallic Sulphides in the Area and the Regulations on Prospecting and Exploration for Polymetallic Nodules in the Area.

58. On 22 July 2014, the Assembly held a special one-day event to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the establishment of the International Seabed Authority. The special session commenced with an address by the Prime Minister of Jamaica.

The Assistant Secretary-General for Legal Affairs of the Office of Legal Affairs delivered a message from the Secretary-General of the United Nations. Statements were made by Tommy Koh, Ambassador-at-Large, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Singapore and President of the Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea and Satya N. Nandan, the first Secretary-General of the Authority. Statements were also made by José Luis Jesus, member of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea and former Chair of the Preparatory Commission for the International Seabed Authority and the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, Hasjim Djalal, first President of the Assembly of the Authority, Vladimir Golitsyn, President of the Seabed Disputes Chamber of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (on behalf of the President of the Tribunal), Mumba Kapumpa, Ambassador of Zambia to the Republic of Korea and Baïdy Diène, former President of the Council of the International Seabed Authority and a former member of the Legal and Technical Commission. Statements were also made by the chairs of the regional groups, several member States and a number of observers.

59. On the recommendation of the Legal and Technical Commission, the Council approved seven new applications for approval of plans of work for exploration for the three main categories of seabed mineral resources in the Area. The Council also considered the summary report of the Chair of the Legal and Technical Commission, the report of the Finance Committee and the report of the Secretary-General on the status of national legislation relating to deep seabed mining and related matters.

XIV. Status of exploration and exploitation in the Area

60. As of 31 May 2015, the Authority had approved a total of 26 plans of work for exploration and entered into 15-year contracts for exploration for marine mineral resources in the Area with 22 contractors. Fourteen of those contracts are for exploration for polymetallic nodules, five for exploration for polymetallic sulphides and three for exploration for cobalt-rich crusts.

61. Since the twentieth session, five new contracts for exploration have been signed. The contract for exploration for polymetallic sulphides with the French Research Institute for Exploitation of the Sea (IFREMER) was signed at Issy-les-Moulineaux, France, on 18 November 2014. The contract for exploration for polymetallic nodules with Marawa Research and Exploration Ltd., sponsored by Kiribati, was signed on 19 January 2015 in New York. The contract for exploration for polymetallic nodules with Ocean Mineral Singapore Pte. Ltd., sponsored by Singapore, was signed in Kingston on 15 January 2015 and in Singapore on 22 January 2015. A formal ceremony to celebrate the signature will take place in Singapore on 15 June 2015. A contract for exploration for cobalt-rich ferromanganese crusts with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of the Russian Federation was signed in New York on 10 March 2015. The contract for exploration for polymetallic sulphides with the Federal Institute for Geosciences and Natural Resources of Germany was signed on 6 May 2015 in Berlin.

62. Four plans of work for exploration that were approved by the Council during the twentieth session have not yet been converted into contracts. The pending contracts are with UK Seabed Resources Ltd, the Government of India, the Cook Islands Investment Corporation and Companhia de Pesquisa de Recursos Minerais of Brazil. It is expected that contracts will be finalized and signed during 2015.

A new application for approval of a plan of work for exploration for polymetallic nodules in a reserved area was received on 8 August 2014 from China Minmetals Corporation, sponsored by China. The application was considered by the Legal and Technical Commission during its meeting in February 2015. The recommendations of the Commission with respect to the application will be considered by the Council during the twenty-first session.

63. Seven of the existing 15-year exploration contracts are due to come to an end between March 2016 and March 2017, involving the following contractors: Interoceanmetal Joint Organization, Yuzhmorgeologiya, the Government of the Republic of Korea, the China Ocean Mineral Resources Research and Development Association, Deep Ocean Resources Development Co. Ltd., IFREMER and the Government of India. During the twentieth session, the Council noted that, pursuant to section 3.2 of the standard clauses for exploration contracts, applications to extend plans of work for exploration must be submitted no later than six months before the expiration of the plan of work. This means that the first such applications for extension could be anticipated as early as September 2015, for consideration during the twenty-second session of the Authority in 2016. Accordingly, in its decision ISBA/20/C/31, the Council requested the Legal and Technical Commission, as a matter of urgency and as its first priority in 2015, to formulate draft procedures and criteria for applications for extensions of contracts for exploration, to be submitted to the Council at its 2015 session.

64. In response to the request of the Council, the Commission, at its meeting in February 2015, adopted and proposed to the Council draft procedures and criteria for the extension of approved plans of work for exploration (ISBA/21/C/3). The matter will be taken up by the Council at the twenty-first session.

65. The standard clauses of exploration contracts require that contractors perform and report on certain matters concerning their exploration areas. The first concerns environmental baseline data and the second the resources contained in their exploration areas and their classification into proven, probable and possible reserves and anticipated mining conditions. With regard to the environmental baseline data, in particular data on the fauna associated with their areas, the standard clauses require that contractors gather environmental baseline data as exploration activities progress and establish environmental baselines to assess the likely effects of their activities on the marine environment. While a significant number of samples have been collected by the contractors, following a meeting with them in January 2012 it became clear that the taxonomy used to name the fauna was not standard, making the data contained in the database of the Authority impossible to compare and combine. Following a meeting with representatives of the contractors, the Secretary-General was asked to facilitate the use of a standardized taxonomy. In that regard, it was requested that such standardization be undertaken for megafauna, macrofauna and meiofauna. The first standardization workshop, supported by the Authority and the International Network for Scientific Investigations of Deep-Sea Ecosystems, focused on megafauna associated with polymetallic nodule deposits. Exploration of the abyssal region of the Clarion-Clipperton Zone reveals that there is considerable biodiversity at many scales. Most of that biodiversity remains unknown. The second workshop was hosted by the Korea Institute of Ocean Science and Technology at the East Sea Research Institute, in November 2014. The third workshop on meiofauna associated with polymetallic nodules is expected to be convened later this year in Belgium — see paras. 78 and 79 for much the same information. Upon conclusion

of those workshops, contractors, prospectors and marine scientific research organisations will be in a position to provide the Authority with comparable information and data for either their exploration areas or other areas within the Clarion-Clipperton Zone, and for an environmental management plan for the Zone.

66. The second item that is included in the standard clauses for exploration contracts requires contractors to, inter alia, estimate mineable areas, when such areas have been identified, to include details of the grade and quantity of the proven, probable and possible polymetallic nodule reserves and the mining conditions in their exploration areas (see ISBA/19/C/17, annex 4, paragraph 11.2 (b)). In that regard, although many of the contractors had provided some data and information in their annual reports on the polymetallic nodule resources in their exploration areas, similar problems were identified with respect to the standards and definitions used for proven, probable and possible polymetallic nodule reserves. To overcome those problems, particularly in view of the fact that some of their contracts would expire in the next two years, the Authority convened a workshop in collaboration with the Government of India in October 2014. The workshop reviewed, inter alia, the work being undertaken by contractors for polymetallic nodule exploration in resource classification to determine the need for standardization of the resource data; examined the current practice for land-based mineral development and national reporting standards for exploration results and resource classification; identified special aspects of polymetallic nodule deposits that should be addressed in resource reporting standards; assisted contractors to identify and implement best practices in polymetallic nodule resource evaluation; and determined the amount of work and time required by contractors to complete their work on polymetallic nodule resource evaluation in their exploration areas. The workshop concluded, inter alia, that even in the mineable areas that had been identified by contractors, the resources could only qualify to be classified as inferred, indicated or measured resources. None of the resources could qualify as reserves (proven, probable or possible) until collector and pilot mining tests had been conducted. Moreover, the output from proposed mining systems could not be determined in their absence, making financial models of the mining operation(s) unreliable. Some contractors indicated their desire to undertake collaborative tests of their collectors and to do likewise for pilot mining tests. It was recommended that the Authority support collaboration among interested contractors with regard to collector and pilot mining tests and environmental impact assessment efforts, as a means of helping contractors to reduce costs and risks.

XV. Progressive development of the regulatory regime for activities in the Area

67. The Authority has a fundamental role to play in ensuring that an appropriate regulatory regime is established, in accordance with the Convention and the 1994 Agreement, which provides adequate security of tenure for future exploration for, and exploitation of, the mineral resources of the Area, while ensuring effective protection for the marine environment. The regulatory regime would ultimately be encapsulated in a mining code, which would comprise the whole of the comprehensive set of rules, regulations and procedures issued by the Authority to regulate prospecting, exploration and exploitation of marine minerals in the Area.

A. Prospecting and exploration

68. The mining code currently consists of three sets of regulations covering prospecting and exploration for polymetallic nodules (ISBA/19/C/17, annex), polymetallic sulphides (ISBA/16/A/12/Rev.1, annex) and cobalt-rich ferromanganese crusts (ISBA/18/A/11, annex). In addition to specifying the process through which contracts may be applied for and granted, the regulations set out the standard terms and conditions, applicable to all entities, of contracts with the Authority. The regulations are supplemented by recommendations for the guidance of contractors issued by the Legal and Technical Commission. At present, recommendations have been issued in connection with the assessment of possible environmental impacts arising from exploration (ISBA/19/LTC/8), the reporting of actual and direct exploration expenditure (ISBA/21/LTC/11) and the implementation of training programmes (ISBA/19/LTC/14).

B. Exploitation

69. The Legal and Technical Commission commenced preparatory work on the formulation of draft regulations for the exploitation of marine minerals in 2014. In March 2014, a stakeholder survey was launched, aimed at soliciting from members of the Authority, as well as current and future stakeholders, relevant information for the development of a regulatory framework for the exploitation of minerals in the Area. The survey began a process of stakeholder engagement and consultation as envisaged by the Council and was the first in a series of stakeholder engagements anticipated by the Authority in the development of a regulatory framework, which will incorporate contemporary best practices and from which the Authority expects to benefit from the in-depth views, analysis and opinions of experts on activities in the Area. More than 50 responses were received to the stakeholder survey and are available on the website of the Authority. Those responses were considered by the Commission at its meeting in February 2015.

70. At the twentieth session, the Council requested the Legal and Technical Commission to continue its work on the regulations governing exploitation as a matter of priority and to make available to all members of the Authority and all stakeholders a draft framework for the regulation of exploitation as soon as possible after its meeting in February 2015. In response to the request by the Council, in March 2015, the Commission issued a report entitled: "Developing a regulatory framework for mineral exploitation in the Area" containing, inter alia, a draft framework for the regulation of mineral exploitation in the Area.[3] The draft framework was accompanied by a discussion of the high-level and strategic issues the Commission considered to be of significance in advancing the development of rules, regulations and procedures for exploitation. Additionally, the report contained an action plan to further such development.

71. Also in March 2015, the secretariat issued a discussion paper on the "Development and implementation of a payment mechanism in the Area".[4] The paper set out the main objectives and principles relevant to the development of rules, regulations and procedures in connection with a payment mechanism under the

[3] Available from www.isa.org.jm/files/documents/EN//Survey/Report-2015.pdf.

[4] Available from www.isa.org.jm/files/documents/.../DiscussionPaper-FinMech.pdf.

exploitation regime. It considered feedback from stakeholders who responded to the stakeholder survey carried out by the Authority in 2014. It also presented a number of points for discussion and consideration by member States, including a proposed payment mechanism and relevant terms. Advancing a fair and equitable financial mechanism is particularly challenging and the main aim of the discussion paper is to act both as the starting point for discussion and to provide some structure and direction to that discussion. The paper also highlights the necessity to obtain the latest financial and economic data, estimates and projections in order to build financial models to support assumptions and future recommendations to the Council.

C. National laws and regulations relating to deep seabed mining

72. It is recalled that, at the seventeenth session of the Authority, in 2011, the Council requested the Secretary-General to prepare a report on the laws, regulations and administrative measures adopted by sponsoring States and other members of the Authority with regard to activities in the Area, and invited, for that purpose, sponsoring States and other members of the Authority, as appropriate, to provide the secretariat with information on, or the texts of, relevant national laws, regulations and administrative measures (see ISBA/17/C/20, para. 3). Subsequently, the secretariat established an online database of the information on, or the texts of, national laws, regulations and administrative measures that had been submitted to it and presented an annual report on the status of such national legislation to the Council (ISBA/18/C/8 and Add.1, ISBA/20/C/12, ISBA/20/C/11 and Corr. 1 and Add.1).

73. As at 31 May 2015, the following States had provided information on, or the texts of, relevant national laws, regulations and administrative measures: Belgium, China, Cook Islands, Czech Republic, Fiji, France, Germany, Guyana, India, Japan, Mexico, Nauru, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Niue, Oman, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Tonga, United Kingdom, United States and Zambia. A submission was also received from the secretariat of the Pacific Community, on behalf of the Pacific Islands region.

XVI. Workshops and seminars

74. Since 1998 the Authority has convened international workshops on scientific and technical matters in order to provide it with the best available scientific advice for the formulation of rules, regulations and procedures for managing activities in the Area. The workshops are an important mechanism for the promotion and encouragement of marine scientific research in the Area and a platform for collaboration with contractors and the international scientific community. During the reporting period, two international workshops were held.

A. Workshop on polymetallic nodules resource classification

75. The international workshop on polymetallic nodules resource classification took place from 13 to 17 October 2014 in Goa, India. The workshop was organized by the Authority in collaboration with the Indian Ministry of Earth Sciences. The main objectives of the workshop were to ascertain the status of work undertaken by contractors for polymetallic nodule exploration in the Area, with a view to

standardizing the exploration and resource data required of contractors and to develop guidance for the classification of those mineral resources.

76. The workshop was attended by 40 participants from 15 different countries, including representatives of most of the contractors working with the Authority. Experts from the Committee on Mineral Reserves International Reporting Standards and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe also attended the workshop to provide information on the application of the Committee's international reporting template and the United Nations framework classification for minerals.

77. The participants in the workshop recommended that the Authority should prepare guidelines for resource classification as soon as possible for the purposes of reporting to the Authority. A draft reporting standard, based on the international reporting template, was developed and is currently under review by the Legal and Technical Commission, with the expectation that it will be adopted during the twenty-first session as a recommendation for the guidance of contractors. The workshop also recommended ways that contractors could collaborate for the purpose of conducting pilot mining tests and environmental impact studies.

B. Workshop on taxonomic methods and standardization of macrofauna in the Clarion-Clipperton Zone

78. A workshop on taxonomic methods and standardization of macrofauna in the Clarion-Clipperton Zone took place from 23 to 30 November 2014, hosted by the East Sea Research Institute in Uljin, Republic of Korea. That was the second workshop in a series of three workshops on megafauna, macrofauna and meiofauna respectively, that were agreed between the Secretary-General of the Authority and the contractors at a meeting in Kingston in January 2012. A total of 42 people from 23 countries attended the workshop, including scientific experts, members of the Legal and Technical Commission and scientists working for contractors. The workshop began with one and a half days of expert presentations and half a day of scientists working for contractors presenting their experiences to date of collecting and determining macrofauna. Three subsequent days of hands-on studies of deep sea samples were followed by a final plenary discussion and adoption of 18 recommendations to improve future macrofauna studies to achieve proper baseline studies.

79. The workshop achieved four significant accomplishments: (a) a standardized nomenclature with associated descriptions and keys that were made available for use by contractors; (b) the recommendation of a standardized taxonomic identification including sampling and storing methods for contractors; (c) the provision of guidelines and procedures to be utilized by contractors for baseline studies; and (d) the discussions and agreed guidelines are expected to outline minimum standards to provide data on which to delineate impact reference zones and preservation reference zones within exploration areas. Altogether, the workshop constituted a major step in filling one of the most significant gaps in reporting environmental data by providing guidance and knowledge on macrofaunal taxonomy. The third workshop in the series, on meiofauna, will be held in Belgium in December 2015, hosted by Ghent University.

C. Sensitization seminars

80. Sensitization seminars are organized by the Authority, in partnership with the host country and experts from various scientific and legal institutions associated with the Convention. The seminars aim to bring together experts from the international legal and scientific community with national and regional government officials, scientists, researchers and academics to discuss scientific research on marine minerals and propose mechanisms for improving regional cooperation in scientific research and marine mineral development. Topics covered at the seminars include the status of the legal regimes established for the recovery of minerals, the types of minerals found in the Area, resource evaluation, protection and preservation of the marine environment from prospecting, exploration and mining and capacity-building.

81. The tenth sensitization seminar was held from 17 to 19 March 2015 in Tshwane, South Africa, hosted by the Department for International Relations and Cooperation and the Council for Geoscience of South Africa. The seminar focused on the challenges and opportunities for Africa in scientific research, mineral exploration and exploitation in the Area.

82. Previous seminars have been held in Manado, Indonesia (2007), Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (2008), Abuja (2009), Madrid (2010), Kingston (2011), Mexico City (2013) and at United Nations Headquarters in New York (2010, 2012, 2014). The next sensitization seminar is to be held in Chile in December 2015.

XVII. Capacity development and training

83. There are two main ways in which the Authority seeks to carry out its responsibilities under articles 143 and 144 of the Convention to promote marine scientific research in the Area and build the capacity of developing States in deep sea research and technology. Those are (a) the training programmes provided by contractors as a requirement of their contracts for exploration in the Area and (b) through the Endowment Fund for Marine Scientific Research in the Area. The Authority has also recently formalized its internship programme.

A. Contractor training

84. Contractors with the Authority have a legal obligation to provide and fund training opportunities for trainees from developing States and the personnel of the Authority. The legal basis for the requirement stems from the provisions of the Convention and the 1994 Agreement and is set out in the standard terms of contracts. The purpose of the obligation is to ensure that personnel from developing States are provided with appropriate operational expertise to enable them to participate in deep seabed mining. The training programme is generally formulated following negotiations between the Authority and the contractor, in accordance with the recommendations for guidance issued by the Legal and Technical Commission, and included as schedule 3 of the contract for exploration.

85. In 2013, the Commission adopted revised and updated recommendations for the guidance of contractors on the format and content of training programmes

(ISBA/19/LTC/14), which significantly increased the expected number of training opportunities to be provided by contractors. At the same time, the secretariat streamlined its internal procedures for soliciting candidates for training and for managing the process of selecting candidates in conjunction with the Commission. That included the establishment of a dedicated page on the website for training opportunities, a streamlined application form and the establishment of a permanent roster of qualified candidates for training opportunities. In light of the fact that it is anticipated that, over the next five years, more than 100 training opportunities will become available, the secretariat will continue to investigate ways to give the widest possible publicity to such training opportunities and attract qualified candidates.

86. During the reporting period, applications were solicited for three training programmes. In February 2015, the Legal and Technical Commission selected four candidates and nine alternate candidates for the China Ocean Mineral Resources Research and Development Association fellowship and engineering training programmes under its contract for exploration for polymetallic sulphides. Those programmes were scheduled to commence in March 2015, but have been postponed to July 2015. Two candidates were identified for the training programme of Tonga Offshore Mining Ltd., to take place in June 2015. A third contractor, UK Seabed Resources Ltd., will provide four-year PhD programmes for two candidates from developing States through Plymouth University in the United Kingdom. One trainee will receive on-land training in the analysis of polymetallic nodules, using advanced imaging and analysis techniques, while the second will receive training in deep sea marine biology. Advertisements for those programmes were circulated to all member States and through relevant international scientific institutions and programmes in April 2015. The programmes are scheduled to commence in October 2015 and the final selection of candidates will be made by the Legal and Technical Commission at its meeting in July 2015, in consultation with UK Seabed Resources Ltd. and Plymouth University.

87. The Secretary-General regrets to report the loss at sea, in March 2015, of a trainee from Papua New Guinea, Kledy Koloa, while on board the Russian research vessel *R/V Professor Logachev*, during a cruise to the Russian contract area on the Mid-Atlantic Ridge. The Secretary-General extends his condolences to the Government of Papua New Guinea and the family of Mr. Koloa and expresses his appreciation to the Russian authorities for the thorough and careful investigation that was carried out into the circumstances of the tragic loss of Mr. Koloa.

B. Endowment Fund for Marine Scientific Research in the Area

88. The Endowment Fund for Marine Scientific Research in the Area aims to promote and encourage the conduct of marine scientific research in the Area for the benefit of humankind as a whole, in particular by supporting the participation of qualified scientists and technical personnel from developing countries in marine scientific research programmes and offering them opportunities to participate in training, technical assistance and scientific cooperation programmes. Applications for assistance from the Fund may be made by any developing country or by any other country, if the purpose of the grant is to benefit scientists from developing countries. Pursuant to the agreed procedures, an advisory panel is to be appointed by the Secretary-General of the Authority to evaluate applications for assistance from the Fund and make recommendations to the Secretary-General. Appointments

to the advisory panel are for a period of three years. New members of the panel were appointed by the Secretary-General in 2014. The names of the members of the advisory panel are set out in the annex to the present report.

89. As at 31 May 2015, a total of 66 scientists or government officials from 36 developing countries have been beneficiaries of financial support from the Endowment Fund. The recipients were from Argentina, Bangladesh, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Brazil, Cameroon, China, Colombia, Cook Islands, Costa Rica, Egypt, Fiji, Guyana, India, Indonesia, Jamaica, Madagascar, Maldives, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Micronesia, Namibia, Nigeria, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Philippines, the Russian Federation, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia and Viet Nam.

90. In administering the Fund, the secretariat of the Authority is required to endeavour to make arrangements with universities, scientific institutions, contractors and other entities for opportunities for scientists from developing countries to participate in marine scientific research activities. Such arrangements may include the reduction or waiver of fees for training. The secretariat has carried out a number of activities designed to draw the attention of the international donor community to the opportunities offered by the Fund and to encourage additional contributions. Those activities have included issuing press releases and promotional materials, maintaining a specially designed web page (www.isa.org.jm/contractors/endowment-fund) and establishing a network of cooperating institutions that may be interested in offering places on courses or research opportunities. Members of the network to date include the National Oceanography Centre (United Kingdom), the National Institute of Ocean Technology (India), IFREMER (France), the Federal Institute for Geosciences and Natural Resources (Germany), the National Institute of Oceanography (India), the Natural History Museum (United Kingdom), Duke University (North Carolina, United States), Universidad Nacional Autónoma de Mexico (Mexico) and International Cooperation in Ridge-Crest Studies, an international, non-profit organization which promotes interdisciplinary studies of oceanic spreading centres.

91. To date, two individuals have benefited from training funded by the Endowment Fund in 2015. Abdulkarim Rabiu (Nigeria) and Renee McDonald (Jamaica) completed at-sea training under the project of the Second Institute of Oceanography of China on the South-West Indian Ridge hydrothermal vent.

92. At its twelfth meeting in February 2015, the advisory panel recommended that financial support from the Endowment Fund be awarded to support three training programmes as follows: participation for up to six participants in the twentieth session of the Rhodes Academy of Oceans Law and Policy, to be held in Rhodes, Greece, in July 2015; the award of six bursaries through the International Network for Scientific Investigations of Deep-Sea Ecosystems to attend the fourteenth International Deep-Sea Biology Symposium in Aveiro, Portugal, in September 2015; and support for six candidates from developing countries to attend the tenth session of the Marco Polo-Zheng He Academy of International Oceans Law and Policy in July 2015 in Xiamen and Shanghai, China.

93. At the same time, the advisory panel noted that as a result of the current low interest rate environment, the Endowment Fund was generating less than 1 per cent interest and was therefore not keeping pace with the rate of inflation or the costs of marine scientific research. Based on the current recommendations of the panel, the

funding available for projects would be entirely exhausted in 2015. The panel recommended that the Finance Committee should give consideration to alternatives for investing and managing the Endowment Fund so that it could grow in real terms. The matter will be taken up by the Finance Committee at its meeting in July 2015.

94. The secretariat will continue to take steps to generate interest in the Endowment Fund on the part of potential donors and institutional partners. In that regard, it is noted that, in paragraph 52 of its resolution 69/245, the General Assembly expressed its appreciation to States that have made contributions to the Endowment Fund and encouraged States to make additional contributions to the Fund. It is also noted that during the twentieth session, the Council of the Authority, in its decision relating to the budget of the Authority for the biennium 2015-2016 (ISBA/20/C/21), expressed appreciation to those members of the Authority who had made voluntary contributions to the Endowment Fund and strongly encouraged members of the Authority to make such contributions to the Fund. The Endowment Fund is one of the key mechanisms for enabling capacity-building in the field of marine scientific research in the deep ocean and the Secretary-General wishes to encourage members of the Authority, other States, relevant international organizations, academic, scientific and technical institutions, philanthropic organizations, corporations and private persons to contribute to the Fund.

C. Internship

95. The Authority accepts interns on a limited basis, depending on the specific needs of the respective offices within the secretariat and their capacity to effectively support, accommodate and supervise the interns. In addition, since 2011, the Authority has been a host institution under the United Nations-Nippon Foundation of Japan Fellowship Programme for Human Resources Development and Advancement of the Legal Order of the World's Oceans, administered by the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea.

96. In 2014, owing to the increased, but welcome, interest in the internship programme, the Secretary-General formalized the internship programme by promulgating procedures to streamline and standardize the selection procedures. The purpose of the internship programme is twofold: (a) to provide a framework through which students and young government officials from diverse academic backgrounds gain exposure to the work and functions of the Authority, in order to enhance their educational experience and/or gain experience in the work of the Authority; and (b) to enable the Authority to benefit from the assistance of qualified students and young government officials specialized in various skills within the scope of activities of the Authority. The programme does not consist of clearly defined internship positions; rather, the Authority will define the number and nature of internships on a continuous basis, according to the needs of the various offices. The selection and recruitment procedure will, consequently, be on an ongoing basis and each intern will carry out his or her assignments under the supervision of a designated staff member of the Authority.

97. Interns are responsible, where appropriate, for obtaining the necessary visas and arranging their travel to and from Kingston, as well as accommodation and travel in Kingston. They are not financially remunerated by the Authority. Costs and arrangements for travel, visas, accommodation and living expenses are the

responsibility of the interns or their sponsoring institutions. The Authority accepts no responsibility for the medical insurance of the intern or costs arising from injury, illness or death that may occur during an internship. Applicants for internship must show proof of valid medical insurance coverage to cover the full period of the internship at the duty station and provide a medical certificate of good health prior to the commencement of the internship. The Authority accepts no responsibility for loss or damage to personal effects that may occur during the internship. After the completion of the internship, the Authority will issue certificates to the interns. The Secretary-General would welcome proposals for funding of the internship programme to ensure that individuals from developing countries may benefit from these opportunities.

Annex

Membership of the advisory panel for the International Seabed Authority Endowment Fund for Marine Scientific Research in the Area, 2014-2017

Georgy Cherkashov (reappointed)
Deputy Director
Institute for Geology and Mineral Resources of the Ocean, Russian Federation

Jean-Michel Despax
Permanent Representative to the International Seabed Authority and Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of France in Jamaica

Dong Xiaojun
Permanent Representative to the International Seabed Authority and Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of China in Jamaica

Ariel Fernández
Permanent Representative to the International Seabed Authority and Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Argentina in Jamaica

Kim Juniper
Chief Scientist
Ocean Networks, Canada

Natsumi Kamiya
Deputy Director-General
Japan Oil, Gas and Metals National Corporation

Tommo Monthe
Permanent Representative of Cameroon to the International Seabed Authority and to the United Nations

Gordon Paterson (reappointed)
Research Zoologist
Department of Life Sciences, Natural History Museum, London